

Testimony for HB 6200

My name is Crystal Hart. I have been suffering from lyme disease for over 3 years now. It has invaded my central nervous system damaging my nerves, causing peripheral neuropathy where the damage to my nerves causes pain, numbness, inability to feel, difficulty using my hands, fingers, feet. It has entered my brain, causing confusion & memory issues. All of this has been documented through medical tests.

I have been on antibiotics for over a year now and with close medical care and the experience of my lyme specialist we are slowly seeing improvement in my symptoms. However, I have paid a high price while my insurance company took over 5 months to approve my treatment and my condition worsened steadily. I still fight the battle everyday to get what should be basic coverage for a debilitating illness. It's bad enough that this illness has robbed me and my family of the life we used to have. I can no longer work. Some days I barely function as I try to help my 12 year old tend to her daily activities. I've had to change my entire lifestyle to fight back AND I've had to spend what little energy and good moments that I may have fighting to get approval for tests, treatments and antibiotics that my doctor knows can help me. Many times more of our visits are spent documenting and protecting his treatment methods then trying to treat me, his patient.

What I haven't mentioned yet is that my 12 yr old daughter was also bitten by a tick and tested positive for lyme after displaying symptoms leading up to a drastic change in her ability to study. That was 4 years ago and fortunately she has responded well to antibiotics. However, what is important is that you realize it required repeat doses of these antibiotics. Today, we must monitor her closely and have learned to recognize when the lyme flares again through her body and she requires another course of antibiotics. Fortunately, after 30 days of treatment she becomes symptom free again, until the next time.

Lyme disease has been around long enough and caused enough damage. There is ample data to identify and support that chronic lyme exists and the effective treatment being long term antibiotics. It's necessary that our doctors be allowed to use their medical training and experience to help fight what has become a horrible epidemic.

Hopefully with our letters, our testimony and continued education, this will happen.

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